



University of Nevada
Cooperative Extension

Kids Know Nevada Insects

COMMON NAME:
ORANGE SULPHUR BUTTERFLY
SCIENTIFIC NAME: COLIAS
EURYTHEME

By Kevin Burls and Joy Newton

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I am the orange sulphur butterfly! I can be found in all of the United States, except Alaska and Hawaii. I fly most of the summer, from May to October, in Nevada. When you see me flying, I will look yellow and fast! If you catch me resting with my wings open, I am orange with black edges, and a spot on each wing. It is easiest to find me in open sagebrush meadows, wet meadows, and areas where farmers are growing alfalfa as food for cattle. I usually avoid forests.

**PEER
REVIEWED**

Why am I important?

Like many insects, orange sulphur caterpillars are important in controlling the populations of the plants they eat. In the late summer, they can even gather in large numbers in alfalfa fields, causing damage to plants before harvest. The adults are pollinators of many desert plants, helping them make seed by moving

pollen between like flowers of host plants. Also like many insects, the caterpillars and adults are important food sources for many animals, including spiders, wasps and birds.

What do I eat?

As a caterpillar, I am pretty picky. I only eat the leaves of plants in the bean family, including clovers, lupines and alfalfa. As an adult, I visit the flowers of many plants found in open meadows.

What is my life cycle?



Egg

Like all moths and butterflies, I begin as an egg that hatches a few days after being laid.



Caterpillar

My larval stage is a caterpillar, green in color with a white stripe on each side. I am very small when I am born, the size of the tip of a pencil! When I am big, I am over an inch long.



Chrysalis

When I turn into a pupa, I am called a chrysalis. I stay totally still for six to eight days, turning into an adult butterfly, very different from the way I looked as a caterpillar.



Adult

As an adult, I fly around, visit flowers, and find places to lay eggs.

Egg and adult photos by Kevin Burls.
Caterpillar and chrysalis photos by Nicky Davis.

Orange Sulphur Butterfly Word Search

S R A L L I P R E T A C A F L A F L A C C A K S H
C E H I O G O L D E N B A N N E R P T Z R A S H R
Y Q G P U T P E M E H T Y R U E S A I L O C E I U
T G Q G Y Q H X P Y O Y L F R E T T U B Z R U V H
N A F T B B I N I Q F F J P R K T D P E Z Q L B P
A S I S P P B I V N I J X F L F A B O N F Q L R L
L M T T U Y M W T Z Q D I M Q U H J L E L O U A U
P E P P G A G D F A S D D J N Y L P L F C X G L S
T T A G E D F G E L U P I N E A F J I I E S H L E
S L D F B S O K W Y O F W S O I S W N C L E O I G
O K U P G Z T I L Z K C D R Y Q S T A I C D W P N
H G L C D D O F O J D L O K H N A A T A K H L R A
Y R T X Q V Q T L F D O Y W N G G V O L J D M E R
Q F T D N E C T A R Y V P J E Q Y O R V F Y L T O
H C X B R G R K E E W E D O W E W U X A F K S A B
J Z A L F A L F A A N R Z Q Y H D X N N L D U C R

- Orange sulphur
- Colias eurytheme
- Alfalfa Caterpillar
- Alfalfa

- Caterpillar
- Butterfly
- Larva
- Adult
- Pollinator
- Pupa
- Clover
- Locoweed
- Lupine
- Goldenbanner
- Egg
- Host Plant
- Nectar
- Beneficial
- Pest

Fill in the blanks to complete the paragraph about Orange Sulphur butterflies

The _____ butterfly,

scientific name _____,

is an insect that likes to eat _____,

_____ and

_____ plants.

A plant that an insect lives on is called a _____.

In order, the stages of the life cycle of an orange sulphur butterfly are the _____,

_____,

_____,

and _____.

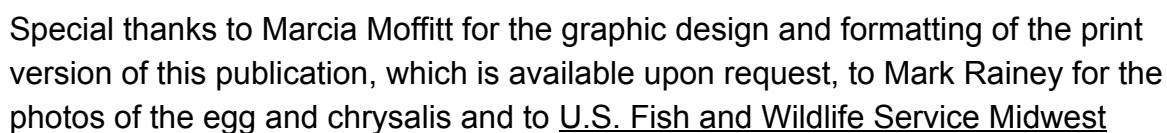
Because the larva feeds on alfalfa, this stage has a common name of _____

_____.

Most butterflies are considered a type of _____, any animal that moves pollen from one flower to another.



The egg must hatch on the proper host plant, or it will not be able to develop into a butterfly.



Region for the photo of the adult

(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmidwest/41230922512>).

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